

April 5, 2001

**CHANGE IN THE ELIGIBILITY FOR CARE OF VETERANS
AWARDED THE PURPLE HEART**

- 1. PURPOSE:** This VHA directive implements eligibility and enrollment requirements for veterans awarded the Purple Heart.
- 2. POLICY:** Public Law 106-117, the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act, amended previous law to place veterans awarded the Purple Heart in enrollment priority group 3, and to exempt those veterans from co-payment requirements associated with provision of hospital care and outpatient medical services.

3. ACTION

a. Veterans awarded the Purple Heart may submit appropriate documentation (i.e., DD 214 annotating receipt of the Purple Heart, DD 215, official service records, and military orders of award) for inclusion into the veteran's Consolidated Health Record (CHR) folder. Health care facilities are also to fax these documents to the Health Eligibility Center at (404) 235-1355.

Note: A certificate of award, in and of itself, will not suffice for verification purposes without the submission of supporting documentation.

b. In early spring software patches DG*5.5*343 and IB*2*145 will be released to the field. This release is the last of three phases in the Purple Heart software project that will automate activities previously done manually at field stations. These patches allow Veterans Integrated System Technology Architecture (Vista) interface between field facilities and the Health Eligibility Center (HEC) regarding Purple Heart awardees. This software should be installed immediately following completion of 3 c and 3 d below.

c. Prior to installation of Phase 3 software Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the project must be completed. Phase 1 patches DG*5.3*314, IVM*2*36, and SD*5.3*235 were released on February 16, 2001. These patches, as well as Emergency patches DG*5.3*365 and DG*5.3*367, must be installed at local facilities prior to further action regarding this project. This software will prepare the local facility for Purple Heart information from the HEC. Local site end users will see no functional changes with the installation of these patches.

d. Phase 2 software will only be installed at HEC and does not affect field stations. However, in addition to the software installation, a class 3 Purple Heart database conversion will occur at HEC. This conversion will populate HEC database with known Purple Heart awardees and transmit them to sites of record for each veteran upon installation of the Phase 3 software.

e. User manuals and Purple Heart informational pamphlets were forwarded to field stations on or about March 16, 2001. Each station must ensure appropriate individuals are provided with manuals and that informational pamphlets are made available to constituents and stakeholders.

THIS VHA DIRECTIVE EXPIRES APRIL 5, 2006

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f. Health care facilities must ensure that those veterans awarded a Purple Heart who were previously, or would be, classified in enrollment priority groups 4 through 7 are placed in enrollment priority group 3 and not charged co-payments for their medical care.

g. Prescription co-payments will continue to be charged to veterans awarded the Purple Heart unless they meet the low-income exemption criteria, are service-connected 50 percent or greater or the medication is for a service-connected condition.

h. Veterans awarded the Purple Heart will continue to be reimbursed for any medical care co-payments paid for VHA care provided on or after November 30, 1999.

i. VHA officials must have verifiable evidence that veterans received the Purple Heart before reimbursing any co-payments or changing veterans' enrollment status.

4. REFERENCE: Public Law 106-117, dated November 30, 1999.

5. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: Health Administration Service (10C3) is responsible for the content of this directive.

6. RESCISSION: VHA Directive 2000-006 and Change 1 are rescinded. This VHA Directive will expire April 5, 2006.

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